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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 OTTAWA 000773

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [CA](#)
SUBJECT: P/DAS VOLKER CONSULTS WITH CANADIANS ON NATO

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Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1. 4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Senior Canadian officials emphasized to visiting EUR P/DAS Volker the similarity of views held by Washington and Ottawa on NATO issues. On ISAF, the Canadians were pleased by the Bucharest Summit outcomes, but they are worried about the weak commitment and focus of some key European partners, the lack of power and support assigned to UN SRSG Kai Eide, and the challenges emanating from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. Ottawa wants to collaborate with the U.S. in an effort to face the range of Russian challenges, to make MAP available to Ukraine and Georgia, and to counter German efforts to steer NATO policy in unhelpful directions. The Canadians are pleased by France's likely change from spoiler to productive member of NATO, and see it as an opportunity to improve NATO-EU relations. Canada supports a "European focused" Ballistic Missile Defense system. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Senior Canadian officials, in a series of meetings with EUR P/DAS and Ambassador-designate to NATO Kurt Volker in Ottawa on June 2, stressed the similarity of views shared by the U.S. and Canada on the major issues facing the transatlantic alliance, but expressed concern that some key European partners may have lost the will and the ability to address critical defense and security challenges. The similarity of outlooks was particularly evident in Canadian thinking on ISAF in Afghanistan (Ottawa's main foreign policy preoccupation after U.S. relations), Kosovo, NATO enlargement and Russian assertiveness, France's recalibration of its place in the alliance, and European ballistic missile defense. The Canadians emphasized the high value they placed on their privileged access in Washington and their desire to deepen bilateral collaboration on defense and security in NATO and beyond.

¶3. (SBU) P/DAS Volker outlined U.S. thinking on NATO, emphasizing the need to seize on progress made at the Bucharest Summit in April. He also stressed the importance of working to re-build NATO's sense of community, to put Afghanistan on a path to success, and to get the alliance to focus on 21-century security threats.

Afghanistan

-- Staying Focused and Winning --

¶4. (C) Deputy Minister of Defence Robert Fonberg told P/DAS Volker that he had just returned from a comprehensive tour of Afghanistan and a three-day visit with the 2,500 Canadian troops in Kandahar. (Note: The current Canadian contribution to OEF & ISAF is 2,973 troops. To date 85 soldiers and one diplomat have been killed, and 295 have been wounded. End note.) Fonberg said he had been impressed by the civil-military unity of purpose in the U.S. effort, in particular the "Nangahar Inc." concept in RC-E, where everyone he encountered understood the link between economic development and strategic success.

¶5. (C) Fonberg noted, as did Canadian PermRep to NATO Rob McRae subsequently, that Canada would like to see a partner deploy additional troops to RC-S's border region near Pakistan. After citing a rumor of an additional upcoming QPakistan. After citing a rumor of an additional upcoming U.S. surge into Afghanistan, Fonberg said that, if true, it would "make a real difference" in RC-S given Canada's inability to sustain control of more than the 45 square kilometers where 80 percent of Kandaharis live.

¶6. (SBU) Separately, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) for Afghanistan Yves Brodeur told P/DAS Volker that the Canadian-funded Afghanistan-Pakistan Cooperation Workshop would complete its Dubai Action Plan on June 16. The Plan would likely focus on harmonizing bilateral border management and on increasing ANSF capacity in the border areas, he said. Building this capacity is a big priority that we need to "get across" to our partners now, he said.

¶7. (C/NF) Fonberg noted that, while he was impressed by the U.S. effort in RC-E and those of Canada's key partners in RC-S, he left Afghanistan "despairing" over the lack of authority and support given to UN SRSK Kai Eide, the sniping

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among ISAF members, and the fact that much of the aid did not benefit its intended recipients in much of the country. McRae picked up the same themes, expressing concern that some key European allies had lost momentum in Afghanistan. McRae said he agreed with General Craddock's recent assertion to the NAC that "NATO time is not good enough," and that it was necessary to make sure that the Europeans were not distracted from the alliance's priority mission by "wind(ing) themselves around the axle" about Kosovo.

¶8. (C) Unlike Fonberg, however, McRae was less concerned about sniping among allies. He observed that, despite "incredible misrepresentations" by the Germans and others about counterinsurgency (COIN) practices of OEF and ISAF, it seemed that with France -- and perhaps the Italians before too long -- stepping-up in Afghanistan, underperforming allies with their counterproductive views on Focused District Development (FDD) and other matters would grow more isolated.

¶9. (C) Canada, McRae said, was generally happy with the political military plan for Afghanistan that emerged from NATO's Bucharest Summit, and now wanted to make a short list of concrete tasks from it for ministers and senior officials to accomplish. This list, he said, ought to include: "fixing the helicopter piece;" turning the "dysfunctional" Afghanistan-Pakistan Tripartite Commission into a political-military body with UN and NATO participation; and, integrating PRTs into NATO planning by identifying common functions, milestones (not time-lines), and models of transition to eventual Afghan ownership.

¶10. (C) Privy Council Office (PCO) Deputy Secretary David Mulroney agreed with P/DAS Volker that one should not expect much courage from Karzai on anti-corruption or other difficult issues before the 2009 election (and even "after"

is an open question). This would make it even more difficult, he said, for Prime Minister Harper and others to succeed in getting Karzai to take ownership of the challenges facing Afghanistan.

-- The UN and Eide --

¶11. (C) The UN's weak support for SRSG Kai Eide, and UNAMA's poor performance in Afghanistan, was a recurring theme throughout the day. Mulroney suggested that the U.S. and Canada look for ways to fix New York's lack of support for Eide as well as the member states and the UN staff's "allergic reaction" to working with NATO. To this end, Afghanistan Task Force Director General Kerry Buck said that the Canadians were open to seeing Eide move from the UN's DPKO to a place closer to the SecGen (e.g., Political Affairs), where he would have the power required to make UNAMA's success in Afghanistan important to the UN.

NATO, Russian Assertiveness, and Enlargement

¶12. (C) Picking up on P/DAS Volker's desire to strengthen the sense of community among NATO Allies, Fonberg remarked that the U.S. would find a "sympathetic collaborator" in Canada. Fonberg added that he often worried about growing factionalism in NATO. He also agreed with P/DAS Volker that the German Grand Coalition's effort to steer NATO policy in unhelpful directions vis-a-vis enlargement, missile defense, and Russia presented the alliance with a major challenge. McRae observed that the NATO-Russia Council was in difficulty due to Russian antics while, thanks to German fecklessness, our side was in disarray.

¶13. (C) Like Fonberg, McRae emphasized that the U.S. and Canadian visions of NATO's future were "very closely aligned." More immediately, he said, there was merit in trying to get Germany involved in an effort to negotiate an end to the conflict between Georgia and its Abkhaz minority. We would need to engage Germany on this in a positive way, he said, and to act firmly on our principles when we interact with Russia. The Russians do not know where their borders are, he added, so we need to be firm in telling them.

¶14. (C) Acting Foreign and Defense Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister Jill Sinclair told P/DAS Volker that PM Harper would made the point to the Ukraine leader in Ottawa during

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their May 26 meeting that the Ukrainian government must be clear about its desire to join NATO. McRae, in a separate conversation, said that the Ukrainians must get serious now or they will "kiss (MAP in) December goodbye." On his subsequent trip to Europe May 27-29, Harper pressed his Italian, German, French, and British counterparts for the quick extension of MAP to Ukraine and Georgia, Sinclair said. Canada's bottom-line, she added, is that MAP is "imperative for Ukraine...but Georgia too."

NATO 60th Summit

¶15. According to McRae, Canada was thinking in terms of suggesting "Twenty-First Century Challenges to a Twenty-First Century NATO" as the theme for the 60th Jubilee. The theme would logically lead to agenda items such as an "Afghanistan Reality Check," with engagement as a litmus test for members, and the good news story of France coming into the new NATO, he said. The agenda risked being hijacked by Russia over missile defense or the Ukraine and Georgia MAP issue, he observed. Looking to the upcoming election in the U.S., McRae noted that NATO goes into disarray when the U.S. "does not lead." Canada, he said, would like to work closely with

the U.S. over the coming year to ensure that NATO's 60th is a success.

France

¶16. (C) McRae agreed with P/DAS Volker's observation that France would likely expect a leadership position in NATO commensurate with the new role it envisions playing, and that at least some of its European neighbors might view the matter as a zero-sum game. Assistant Deputy Minister and PolDir Colleen Swords also agreed, noting that it would be interesting to see how Europeans -- particularly the British and the Germans -- adjust to the potential change. Swords added that Canada was keen to get a look at the long-anticipated French White Paper on defense in order to see how it dealt with France's integration into NATO, with support for the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), and with improving NATO-EU relations.

¶17. (C) Sinclair characterized France's likely change from spoiler to productive NATO member as "breathtaking," and noted that she hoped to use the momentum behind positive change at NATO to fix meetings there. In particular, Sinclair said, Canada would like to work with the U.S., and perhaps France and other like-minded allies, to ensure that meetings were used to address hard issues that some members wanted to avoid, and that meetings were structured in a manner conducive to dialogue. PM Harper often leaves NATO Summits frustrated and wishing he had had more open discussion with his counterparts, she said.

Ballistic Missile Defense

¶18. (C) On Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD), Sinclair agreed that it was a subject that defense ministers would have to face June 12-13 in order to maintain NATO's commitment. She noted that President Bush and PM Harper had agreed on "elegant" language on the way forward for BMD, with Canada able to support a "European-focused system." Qable to support a "European-focused system."

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WILKINS